We love soup at our house. That is probably an understatement, with the truth being more like, WE LOVE SOUP AT OUR HOUSE! I understand many folks break their culinary year into seasons, with a weather based menu. This means they cook cooler foods like BLT sandwiches on Sally Sunflower toasted bread during hot times and save hearty soups for the cooler season. We did that at one time too, with the soup season set aside for the few months when the hot weather had not taken soup off the dinner rotation. In Mississippi, and especially this year, warmer is translated as HOT! Then one day, it occurred to me our AC has lower temperature settings that go very well with soup in the heat of summer.

When we lived in Meridian, we often dined at Olive Garden. We had friends there who liked the OG version of Italian food, so it was a go to place for meals when we went out to eat with our friends. Usually I had no real preference for what I ordered as long as it began with their Zuppa Toscana Soup. It had Italian Sausage, creamy potatoes and some sort of green stuff in a tasty, soupy combination. Then (eureka!) I decided there was no reason why I couldn’t make an exact copy of this Olive Garden soup treat. Years later, after we moved back here, I noticed several reports on the news, where folks were getting their vehicles stolen while they were inside eating Zuppa Toscana soup, so we eliminated the OG restaurant from our dining out

rotation. Whether that still happens, nine years later, may or may not be true, but I do just fine making my own Zuppa at home and you will too.

Zuppa Toscana Soup – An Italian sausage soup treat
Ingredients:
2 or 3 thick slices of bacon
5 links Italian sausage (I use mild)
4 cups Kale, chopped
1 medium onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/8 teaspoon Cayenne pepper
2 teaspoons garlic salt
1 pinch (1/8 teaspoon +-) Red Pepper flakes
2 medium/large russet potatoes with skin scrubbed clean – not peeled, sliced into 1/4 inch thick bite sized wedges
3 cans chicken broth or good chicken stock, if you have it
2 Tablespoons flour
1 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup white wine

Directions:
In the pot you will use to cook the soup, cook two or three (5 or 6?) slices of bacon (thick cut) that have been cut into 1/2 inch pieces.

When cooked, set the bacon aside for use when serving the soup. Do not snack on the bacon, or discard the bacon fat. It will be used in the recipe.

Remove the Italian sausage from the casing and portion it into spoon sized pieces (1/2 to 3/4 inch). It’s absolutely fine to use bulk packed instead of links. Just couldn’t find bulk packed the day I took these photos. Cook the sausage in the bacon fat then remove all but 1 Tablespoon of the rendered fat from the pan.

Dice a medium onion and add it to 1 Tablespoon of the rendered fat in the pot. Sauté the onions until they are tender.

Add 1 Tablespoon (3 cloves) of fresh chopped garlic and 1/4 cup white wine.

Scrub the 2 potatoes clean, but do not peel. Slice them into 1/4 inch (spoon sized) wedges.

Season with 2 teaspoons Garlic Salt, 1/8 teaspoon Cayenne pepper, 1/8 teaspoon black pepper and a pinch of red pepper flakes. Stir in the seasonings and allow them to heat bloom for a minute or two.

Add the cooked sausage.

Then add three cans of chicken broth, or water and a chicken bouillon cube or two, which is what I used here. Cook with a lid over medium heat for 10 minutes.

Add the potatoes.

Chop the Kale into spoon sized pieces, add it to the soup and cook for 3-5 minutes. The Kale does not need more than this amount of time to cook. When it changes color to dark green, it is done.

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Make a wet slurry of 2 Tablespoons flour with the cup of heavy cream. Add this thickener to the soup. Stir in well and simmer for 5 minutes to allow the soup to thicken. Taste for seasoning. Do not add any salt before tasting for seasoning.

heavy
whipping cream
heavy
whipping cream

Serve, topped with bacon pieces and butter toasted French bread on the side.

Unsalted
Unsalted

Thanks for looking at my post.
God bless you.